

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) ~~Ballasting~~ A ballasting device for a crane, ~~in particular for a tower crane,~~ combining ballast blocks that can be stacked onto a base frame ~~of of~~ the crane, and a gripper for handling the ballast blocks, the gripper ~~being~~ designed to be connected, during use, to a handling means, ~~this device comprising means of that provides a~~ nonpermanent connection, by hooking, between the gripper ~~and and~~ a ballast block, and also ~~means for centering the~~ centers stacked ballast blocks ~~relative relative~~ to one another, ~~characterized in that wherein the aforementioned means of nonpermanent connection~~ comprise handling device comprises: two opposed gripping hooks mounted pivotably, about horizontal pins, in ~~the~~ end regions of a lifting beam ~~of of~~ the gripper, each gripping hook having, on one side of its pivot pin, a hooking catch designed to interact with a transverse pin ~~placed placed~~ in a corresponding housing ~~of of~~ a ballast block, and, on the other side of its pivot pin, a rear part ~~attached attached~~ to a sling ~~by by~~ which the gripper ~~is is~~ suspended from ~~the a~~ hoisting cable, each gripping hook ~~being assigned provided with a lock that that~~ is borne by the lifting beam and designed to temporarily keep ~~the a~~ corresponding gripping hook in ~~the a~~ position in which the transverse pin ~~is is~~ released.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~Ballasting~~ The ballasting device for a crane according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that claim 1, wherein the lifting beam is constituted by beam~~ comprises two parallel bars or profiles that are secured to one another with a longitudinal gap left between them, so as to form, at the two ends of the lifting beam, clevises serving for the articulation of the two ~~suspension~~ gripping hooks.

3. (Currently Amended) ~~Ballasting~~ The ballasting device for a crane according to Claim 2, ~~characterized in that claim 2, wherein~~ vertical protective plates are fastened onto the

two ~~parallel bars or profiles~~ profiles of the lifting beam, ~~these the vertical~~ plates protecting the end region in which ~~the a~~ rear part of each of the gripping hooks travels.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~Ballasting~~ The ballasting device for a crane according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that the wherein a rear part of of each gripping hook itself~~ constitutes, or bears, comprises a counterweight.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~Ballasting~~ The ballasting device for a crane according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein each sling forms forms~~ forms an angle of less than 180° with the longitudinal axis of the corresponding gripping hook.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~Ballasting~~ The ballasting device for a crane according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein each lock of of the gripper is a lock mounted pivotably about a horizontal pin borne borne by the lifting beam, the lock having lock having a bent shape, with a lower part forming a counterweight, and an upper part that part that forms a locking catch and is provided with a ramp intended to interact that interacts with a control finger borne by the a rear part of the corresponding gripper hook.~~

7. (Currently Amended) ~~Ballasting~~ The ballasting device for a crane according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein the ballast blocks, made essentially of concrete, each comprise two metal grip parts, embedded in the concrete, that each delimit a housing capable of partially receiving a one of the two opposed gripping hook hooks, each metal grip part being provided with a transverse pin pin passing through the housing delimited by said part and designed to interact with the locking catch of of a gripping hook engaged engaged in this the housing.~~

8. (Currently Amended) ~~Ballasting~~ The ballasting device for a crane according to ~~Claim 7, characterized in that claim 7, wherein two right-angle positioning brackets are are~~ fastened under the lifting beam, ~~these the~~ brackets ~~being~~ designed to interact, respectively,

with the upper edges of the housing delimited by the two metal grip parts of a the ballast block.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~Ballasting~~ The ballasting device for a crane according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that the means further comprising a centering device for centering the stacked ballast blocks relative to one another comprise,~~ the centering device comprising: ~~on each ballast block,~~ conical centering pegs ~~the that~~ protrude above ~~the an~~ upper face of the ballast block, and a pair of corresponding housing of housings having a flared shape; disposed at opposing ends of the ballast blocks, in particular of conical or pyramidal shape, ~~that open and the housing opens~~ out in the lower face of the ballast block.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~Ballasting~~ The ballasting device for a crane according to Claim 9, ~~characterized in that one of the housings of flared shape of each ballast block has~~ the claim 9, wherein the housings have a general shape of a pyramid of rectangular base elongated in ~~the a~~ longitudinal direction of ~~this the~~ ballast block.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~Ballasting~~ The ballasting device for a crane according to ~~claim 2,~~ characterized in that claim 9, wherein the centering pegs and the corresponding housings ~~belong to~~ comprise metal centering ~~parts parts,~~ each metal centering ~~part part~~ extending vertically over one side of connected to a metal grip ~~part part~~ and being attached to ~~the latter~~ to constitute a single metal insert embedded in the concrete of the ballast block.

12. (Currently Amended) ~~Ballasting~~ The ballasting device for a crane according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the lifting beam is provided at its ends with rings designed to receive a guide rope that can be used while handling a ballast block hooked in under the lifting beam.